

SENATE BILL REPORT

EHB 1728

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Government Operations & Elections, March 23, 2009

Title: An act relating to the issuance of checks by joint operating agencies and public utility districts.

Brief Description: Regarding the payment of claims or obligations by joint operating agencies and public utility districts.

Sponsors: Representatives Takko, Haler, Ericks, Angel, Carlyle and Van De Wege.

Brief History: Passed House: 3/03/09, 97-0.

Committee Activity: Government Operations & Elections: 3/23/09 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ELECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Fairley, Chair; Oemig, Vice Chair; Roach, Ranking Minority Member; McDermott, Pridemore and Swecker.

Staff: Sharon Swanson (786-7447)

Background: A public utility district (PUD) is a type of special purpose district authorized for the purpose of generating and distributing electricity, providing water and sewer services, and providing telecommunications services. A PUD may operate on a countywide basis or may encompass a smaller jurisdiction. However, most PUDs have jurisdictional boundaries that are coextensive with a county and function as a regional governing body with respect to providing their statutorily authorized services to the public. There are currently 28 operating PUDs in this state, many of which provide a mix of services: 23 provide electrical services; 19 provide water and/or wastewater services; and 13 provide wholesale broadband telecommunications services. PUDs are governed by a board of either three or five elected commissioners.

Joint operating agencies (JOAs) are a type of municipal corporation jointly formed by cities and public utility districts in order to develop electricity generation projects. The JOAs have broad authority to engage in projects involving the generation, production, transmission, purchase, or sale of electric energy.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Summary of Bill: The board of a JOA is authorized to adopt a policy for the payment of claims or obligations by either check or warrant. Checks may only be used if the pertinent fund is solvent, otherwise the payment must be by warrant. In order to use checks, the board must choose a qualified public depository upon which the checks are to be drawn and designate the officers required or authorized to sign the checks.

The commission of a PUD may also adopt such a policy for the payment of claims by check or warrant, but only if the treasurer of the PUD is someone other than the county treasurer.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: This is a good bill that the committee has heard before. There is no controversy regarding the provisions of this bill.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Representative Takko, prime sponsor; Jim Rowland, Energy Northwest.